

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th April 2014 at 8.00pm in the Cavendish Hall, Church Road, Thurston, as prepared by the Acting Clerk to the Council.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr S Campbell, took the Chair.

In Attendance: Parish Cllrs. D Ames, C Dashper, R Fawcett, Mrs A O'Connell, B Rainbow, P Robinson, Mrs J Service, M Thomas, Vicky Waples, Acting Parish Clerk; County Cllr Penny Otton; PC Annelly Miles and seven members of the public.

1. Opening and Welcome -

The meeting was declared open at 8.00pm.

2. Apologies for Absence – PCSO Claire Cox; Community College; Primary School; Methodist Church; Rev. Alan Gates on behalf of St Peters.

3. Minutes of APM 17th April 2013 – These having been previously circulated were unanimously approved as a true record of the meeting.

4. Chairman's Report – *a full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council.*

The Chairman delivered a report outlining the Council's activities during the past year, and the plans for the year to come. Thurston Parish Council was made up of a full complement of 11 volunteer councillors. Over the past year, one councillor had resigned for personal reasons and he offered the Council's thanks to Teresa Harvey for her humour and contributions to the work of this council. We also welcomed David Ames and very recently Mark Wallace to the council this year, both of whom have fitted in and contributed well. I would like to thank Peter Robinson and Chris Dashper (our Vice Chairman) for chairing three TPC meetings when I was unable to attend and also for attending countless meetings over the past year during the day while I was at work and to all the councillors for their support and humour over the past year. Kathryn Savage, our clerk, has been on long term sick leave since August last year and we wish her well in her recovery. We have in place an interim Clerk Vicky Waples who has improved the way we work, keeps us all in order and gives valuable advice where necessary and is full of energy.. We are well supported by our Suffolk County Councillor Penny Otton and our Mid Suffolk District Councillors Derrick Haley and Sam Powell who attend most of our monthly meetings. The Parish Council office is open every Tuesday and Friday where residents can raise queries or obtain information on council activities with monthly Parish Council meetings held on the first Wednesday of every month in the Parish Council Office Meeting Room. Many of you will know that we match-fund our very own Police Community Support Officer for Thurston and that we have had Claire Cox in this position for over a year. For the 2013/14 financial year the Thurston Parish Council raised the precept (the part of the council tax that pays for grit bins, bus shelters, seats, recreation grounds maintenance, litter bins and dog litter bins and some of the street lighting in the village) from £53,000 to £54,500. The organisations we supported this year include New Green Community Centre, the maintenance of the church yard of the St Peter Church, the village library. Thurston Parish Council also continues to fund the public liability insurance for the 68 club annual firework display. This year (ending 5 April 2014) due to further cost increases, we have had to increase the precept by a further 2.5% which is below the level of inflation. One of the statutory roles played by the Thurston Parish Council is in planning applications and as a statutory consultee, the PC has assessed just under 40 planning applications for building in and around Thurston. During the year, it became apparent that we needed to upgrade our village website and working with Penny Kelly who maintains the current website, the new Thurston Village website will be up and running by the end of April. I would like to thank Vicky and Penny especially for their input and patience. The other big project is that we have started work on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Thurston. Following the lively public meeting last May held in the New Green Community Centre we have selected a group of 12 people who have enthusiastically started work on the project and have developed a vision and a plan to get information from the village via a questionnaire and a series of public meetings – the first to be held in June.

5. **Report from County Cllr Mrs P Otton** – *a full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council*

Cllr Mrs Otton reported on SCC's and Mid Suffolk's objection to plans to toll the A14 as part of the plans to improve the A14. She was also pleased to have been able to support the letter to the MP to encourage Highways Agency to remove the concrete parts of the road and thus reduce the noise. She mentioned the recent Fire Safety in the Home presentation; suggestions from a working party for implementing mandatory 20mphs in certain locations; agreement from Highways to insert 30mph roundels on Beyton and Barton roads; agreement from SCC to fund several apprenticeships across the county, working in conjunction with schools to make this happen; plans for the conversion of Beyton into the 6th form were progressing; criticism within Raising the Bar report as to why a rural partner was not chosen instead of Hackney; following the recent unprecedented rainfall and winds the county council had been faced with numerous problems; 2 new broadband boxes have been installed in Thurston Cavendish Hall and she had been able to be present at the official opening of the new facilities at New Green including the new parish council offices and to have been able to help with the cost of the refurbishment from her locality budget.

6. **Report from District Cllr D Haley & Mrs Powell** – *a full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council.*

Cllr Mr Haley was invited to submit his report in which he mentioned that over the past couple of years joint delivery teams had been set up which would serve both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils. He would leave a copy of the 'Putting Mid Suffolk In Perspective Report' with the Clerk which detailed the two Council's activities and aims over the past and coming year. He mentioned that SCC, Suffolk's District Councils, Local Authorities and Local Enterprises would be part of a joint consultation on the possible upgrading of the A14 to ensure that it was fit for purpose; that there were challenging times ahead with regards to the budget as savings of £5.8m were being sought and that collaboration between partners etc. was the best way of achieving value for money. He made the meeting aware that he had assisted with meetings between concerned residents and Network Rail over complaints from the frequency and alarms at the Station and that although the planning application for a bridge across the rail line at Heath Road had been withdrawn he was hopeful that it would be resubmitted shortly given the recent accident further up the line. He mentioned that the Parish Council's nominations for Mid Suffolk's Community Achievement Award had been successful and that the energy from waste plant at Great Blakenham was on target to open at the end of the year. When questioned he confirmed that it would burn all those items in the black bin and items that cannot be recycled.

7. **Report from Mid Suffolk South SNT** - *A full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council.*

PC Annelly Milles reported that there had been 25 crimes between April 2013 and March 2014, which was 35 less than in the previous year. In addition there had been 7 arrests / resolutions made in connection with these offences with one case still ongoing. A breakdown of the crimes included thefts; theft of a motor vehicle fraud by false representation; criminal damage; burglaries; assaults; drink drive offences and drug offences. Mid Suffolk South SNT had overall seen a crime decrease of 13% over the previous 12 months with the total number of crimes across the Mid Suffolk South being 868. PC Miles informed the meeting of changes in events in which PCSO Cox and other members of the force had been involved with over the past year and thanked the Parish Council for their help and support throughout the past year. PC Miles confirmed that there were 18 villages within the Mid Suffolk South SNT. The Chairman thanked both PC Miles and PCSO Cox for the work they carried out on behalf of the village.

THERE FOLLOWED A SHORT INTERVAL DURING WHICH THE LADIES OF THURSTON EVENING WOMEN'S INSTITUTE SERVED REFRESHMENTS

8. **Reports from Parish Council Representatives -**

a) Recreation Ground Trust – Cllr Dashper, Chair of the Trust thanked all the regular users, the Caretaker and the joint members of the Recreational Ground. He reported that the Trustees was pleased to see the pre-school moving into its own building and felt all was positive for the future. Anti-dog fouling notices had been erected and were hopefully making a difference. He mentioned that the pavilion was in need of some tidying and refurbishment and that during the coming year the Trust would be looking at works required to the changing rooms to make them more suitable for all users. It was anticipated that these works would be funded from S106 monies for Thurston held at MSDC.

b) 1st Responders – first established in 2005 with currently only 2 active responders and possible 3 new members who had been trained and passed their assessment. Training of the new group was being undertaken within the Parish in conjunction with Wickhambrook and Fornham. There was a need for more people to be involved. From June the team would be able to respond to paediatrics from the age of 2+. There was a need for new equipment for this age group and funding was being sourced. The meeting was reminded that East of England Co-Op had purchased and installed a public access Defibrillator which was located on the side of the library.

c) Library – it was reported that Thurston Community Library was a joint use library located at Thurston Community College and part of Suffolk Libraries. The Parish Council provides funds, on behalf of the village, to open the library during hours when it wouldn't normally open. Thurston Library has expanded its horizons over the past year: book sales which had been well supported locally; Trips to London; Jubilee Celebrations; Ipad Raffle; Italian Meal and a 'Write Now' talk. For the coming year there was another Trip to London; a further trip to a place of interest; purchase of e-readers and a joint event with St Peter's Church. Thanks were offered to the Librarian and to the support given by the Parish Council; Volunteers; County and District Councillors. Thanks were also offered to all those who supported the library as the numbers of people coming to the library had increased over year.

d) Footpaths – Cllr Mrs Service, as the Council's Footpath Officer reported that all the Parish's footpaths were walked regularly and all appeared passable. The water meadows were acceptable. It was mentioned that dog walkers were being requested to remove all rubbish and articles would be inserted into the newsletter reminding dog owners of their responsibilities in clearing up after their own dogs. The meeting was reminded that either she or the Clerk could be contacted should there be anything amiss with the footpaths and that there were leaflets in the Parish Council Office detailing the local footpaths.

e) Thurston Relief in Need Charity - Cllr Mrs Service reported that the charity was funded by investments, and renting out land in its ownership. There were currently 5 trustees and the aim of the Charity was to make payments to those in hardship or need. Income was derived from land that was rented out and recycling credits from the recycling bins on the granary site. However the meeting was made aware that the owner of the Granary had asked that the recycling bins were removed from his land. The trustees were currently in talks with MSDC and another organisation within the village for their possible re-siting. Once more is known article would be put into the newsletter.

9. Reports from Village Organisations

a) 1st Thurston Scouts – the leader of the Scouts reported that the troop was the largest in the District and County, with 90 youth members between the ages of 11 and 14 which provided activities for 50 weeks a year. The membership had grown and there was a substantial waiting list. However there was still a shortage of leaders which prevented them from offering more sessions. During the year the conversion of the loft at the Cavendish Hall had allowed them to use it for storage and the leaders were now making use of this area. There was a reinvigorating fund raising and management committee and the group were looking for a treasurer and/or secretary. He offered his thanks and appreciation to the team of 11/12 who put together all the activities undertaken by the scouts.

b) Cavendish Hall – the Chairman of the Cavendish Hall offered thanks to the 1st Thurston Scouts and group for the refurbishments to the loft and staircase – works which were long awaited and much improved. She offered thanks to the management committee and was very pleased to see work being carried out to the pre-school building but the hall now needs some work undertaken to re-promote and regain lost revenue. The meeting was informed that the Scouts have taken on the loft and staircase on a licence to occupy. She thanked all the hall's supporters and looked forward to their continued support.

c) Village Website – the original high aspirations had been scaled down and it had been agreed that the best way forward would be to revamp the Parish Council website as a village website. The work on this was ongoing and access in the initial stage would be through the current village website address. A promotional drive would be undertaken once the new website was up and running.

d) New Green Centre - a Trustee of the New Green Community Trust reported that the last year had seen a few changes at the community centre. The previous October has seen the refurbishment of the kitchen and both sets of toilets with further refurbishment works being planned. The bowling green was now in regular use by the cricket club. It was mentioned that the Forge Church was planting a new church in Thurston and from Easter would become regular hirers of the NGC facilities for their activities. It was also mentioned that the NGC Trust was also looking for more people to join the Trustees and volunteers/helpers. There were currently only 6 Trustee members. It was mentioned that from recent advertising there were possibly 4 new members coming forth and that the Trust had obtained agreement to reduce the number of trustees from 12 to 8. Great Barton Free Church had decided that they will no longer be involved in the running of the Thurst Coffee Bar and that negotiations were underway to continue the service with another party. The Trust would like to take this opportunity to thank the Great Barton Free Church for their involvement with the New Green since 2009.

e) Thurston Pre-School –a report was submitted by the Chairman of the Pre-School in which it was mentioned that over the past year the committee and staff had worked tirelessly, and with the help of some key members of the community, to reassure SCC that the build could be sound and should go ahead as they nearly decided not to go ahead as the cost was now far greater than predicted three years previously when the original plans had been submitted. The planned completion date was near the end of June and therefore the pre-school would be officially moving into the building in September 2014. It was planned that there would be time spent settling in before the children joined in September to ensure any disruptions were kept to a minimum. There would be many fundraising events planned for over the coming months: ‘Sale Trail’ and a ‘Pamper Evening’. All parties would be involved in the launch days and it was hoped that the Parish Council, County Councillor Penny Otton and the Chair of the Cavendish Hall, all of whom had helped in great ways, to join in these celebrations with dates to be confirmed and information to be passed on in due course.

f) Thurston Primary School – a written report had been received from the Head Teacher in which it was reported that the school has had a good start to becoming an all through primary. It has retained the oldest year group who are now Year 5 and in Osprey Class. There have been some exciting opportunities including a residential trip; trombone lessons and swimming each week for a term at Mid Suffolk leisure centre. Early in the summer term the Year 5 will be given the opportunity to extend their cycling proficiency training and take part in ‘Bike-ability’ run by SCC. The whole school has enjoyed learning a varied number of topics and a number of school trips were planned for the Summer term. Visitors had included PCSO Cox who had visited to talk about Road Safety and police report writing. Barclays Bank had also visited to work on money activities and there had been a Tudor Day for the older pupils which finished with a banquet, complete with silver goblets and trenchers. The Friends of Thurston School had been very busy raising funds to provide extra resources for the pupils and their main focus for the next year was to raise money to pay for an outside classroom pavilion and some benches for the playground. The school has sustained its links with Thurston Lunch Club and Year 5 pupils visited the group at New Green in January to sing, dance and share news. Both groups had benefitted from the visit. Links with the Church of St Peter remain strong, with our pupils using the church at least once a term for special assemblies to celebrate the Christian Festivals. We also marked Remembrance Day this year. In September the school would be welcoming a new teacher to the school who will be in charge of the new Year 6 Class – the name of which will be chosen by the Key Stage 2 children during the summer term, after a bird of prey.

g) Women’s Institute – it was reported that there were 45 members who met on a monthly basis and the previous year had held 3 workshops and a visit to Holton Hall and had celebrated the Institute’s 95th birthday. The group had also provided refreshments for the Women’s GB Cycle Tour.

10. **To receive issues from members of the public present** – there were none raised.

11. The Chairman having thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and the WI for providing refreshments, and there being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 9.30pm

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....